

## COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 19, 2007, at 10 a.m. to hold a nomination hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 19, 2007, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a hearing on the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on Tuesday, June 19, 2007, at 9:30 a.m. in order to conduct a hearing entitled: "The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the Federal Government: A Model Public-Private Partnership Accelerating Research Toward a Cure."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 19, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. to hold an open hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Crystal Bridgeman, a fellow on my staff, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of this session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Jodie Sweitzer, an intern with my staff on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, be granted the privileges of the floor during the remainder of debate on the energy bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMPROVING HEAD START ACT OF  
2007

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 137, H.R. 1429, the Head Start authorization bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1429) to reauthorize the Head Start Act, to improve program quality, to expand access, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome the Senate's action on this important legislation, the Head Start for School Readiness Act.

I commend Senator ENZI, Senator DODD, and Senator ALEXANDER for their bipartisan cooperation on this legislation, and I thank all the Senators on the HELP Committee for their contributions to improving Head Start to meet today's challenges. We began this process four years ago. Today, our bipartisan efforts have resulted in the strengthening of a 42 year old program that has been a lifeline of support for millions of low-income children preparing for school and for life.

Since the War on Poverty, Head Start has delivered the assistance needed to enable disadvantaged children to arrive at school, ready to learn. Its comprehensive services provide balanced meals for children, support visits to the doctor and dentist, and teach young children important learning and social skills. It helps families with the greatest needs get on their feet, and encourages parents to participate actively in their child's early development.

Years of evaluation have demonstrated that Head Start works. A Federal survey found that Head Start children make both academic and social gains under the program, and that these gains continue when children enter kindergarten. Once Head Start children complete their kindergarten year, they are near the national average of 100 in key areas, with scores of 93 in vocabulary, 96 in early writing, and 92 in early math.

Over the years, we've also learned more about how Head Start can be improved. This reauthorization applies that knowledge to make modifications in the program, and it will enable Head Start to be even more effective in the years ahead.

In this legislation, we expand Head Start to include thousands of low-income children who are not yet served by the program. We provide for better coordination of Head Start with State programs for low-income children. We strengthen Head Start's focus on critical early learning skills and school readiness. We enhance the educational goals for Head Start teachers. We preserve the community-based structure of the program to ensure that the needs of local neighborhoods and their children are the top priority. We also provide greater accountability for the program, including new policies to provide improved monitoring visits and guarantee that programs with deficiencies receive needed attention and support.

To strengthen Head Start, we must begin by providing more resources for it. Child poverty is on the rise again and the need for Head Start is greater than ever. Today, less than 50 percent of children eligible for Head Start participate in the program. Hundreds of

thousands of 3- and 4-year-olds are left out because of inadequate funding. Early Head Start serves only 3 percent of eligible infants and toddlers. It is shameful that 97 percent of the children eligible for Early Head Start have no access to it. This legislation expands access to Head Start to serve as many infants, toddlers, and preschool children and their families as possible.

The bill establishes goals to increase funding and expand the program to provide nearly \$8 billion worth of services by 2010. These funding levels are essential to carry out the essential reforms in the legislation and to serve thousands of additional children and families.

In 1994, we enacted Early Head Start to benefit infants, toddlers, and their families. It has worked ever since. Early Head Start children have larger vocabularies, lower levels of aggressive behavior, and higher levels of sustained attention than children not enrolled in the program. Early Head Start parents are more likely to play with their children and read to them. These activities increase a child's desire to learn and strengthen a family's commitment to education. Our bill doubles the size of Early Head Start over the course of the authorization, and includes a commitment to serve 56,000 additional children.

The bill also establishes a Head Start Collaboration Office in every State to improve support for Head Start children, to align Head Start with kindergarten classrooms, and to strengthen its local partnerships with other agencies. These offices will work hand in hand with the Head Start network of training and technical assistance to support grantees in meeting the goals of preparing children for school.

I'm especially pleased that the bill provides the blueprint needed to upgrade and strengthen other early childhood education programs and services in the states. The bill provides an active role for states in coordinating early childhood education and development programs, and designates an Early Care and Education Council in each state to undertake the activities essential to developing a comprehensive system for the nation's youngest children. The councils will conduct an inventory of children's needs, develop plans for data collection, support early childhood educators, review and upgrade early learning standards, and make recommendations on technical assistance and training. For States ready to move forward and implement their statewide plan, the legislation offers \$100 million to support incentive grants for States to implement these important efforts.

Over the past four decades, Head Start has developed quality and performance standards to guarantee a full range of services, so that children are educated in the basics about letters, numbers, and books, and are also healthy, well-fed, and supported in stable and nurturing relationships. Head